AVATAR

The Last Airbender

BOOK ONE: WATER

CHAPTER NINETEEN: "The Siege of the North, Part 1"

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FADE IN:

EXT. NORTHERN WATER TRIBE TRAINING FIELD - DAY

KATARA is sparring with an inept young Waterbender -- SANGOK. The young man does an awkward bending maneuver, successfully transforming a water blast into and icy sphere, which he launches at Katara. Katara expertly redirects the attack, circling the sphere behind her. Then she transforms it back into liquid water, and sends the rushing wave back at her opponent. The wave nails him, raising him up a few feet in the air, then freezing him in place. He looks terrified, as though his life just flashed before him. MASTER PAKKU approaches with a critical eye.

MASTER PAKKU
Nice try, Pupil Sangok. A couple of more years, and you might be ready to fight a sea sponge.

Pakku does a casual move, turning the ice wave back to water and releasing Sangok, who tumbles to the ground.

MASTER PAKKU (cont'd)
Would anyone care for a rematch with Katara?

PAN ACROSS the class of defeated, young males, all of whom look like they've just lost a fight. They all shake their heads 'no'. Pakku turns to Katara.

MASTER PAKKU (cont'd)
Katara, you've advanced more quickly than any student I've ever trained. You have proven that with fierce determination, passion, and hard work, you can accomplish anything. Raw talent alone is not enough...

With that he turns to Aang.

MASTER PAKKU (cont'd)
Pupil Aang!

REVEAL AANG, who is bending a spinning ball of air, which MOMO is running on top of. Startled, Aang stops spinning the ball. Momo's momentum carries him right off the ball and crashing onto the floor.

AANG
Yes, Master Pakku?

MASTER PAKKU
Care to step into the sparring circle? I figure since you've found time to play with house pets, you must have already mastered Waterbending.

AANG
I wouldn't say "mastered," but check this out!

Aang does a small Waterbending move that splashes Momo. Momo shakes himself dry and then splashes water at Aang. Pakku glares at them disapprovingly.

EXT. WATER TRIBE CITY - THAT MOMENT

SOKKA is taking a tour of the city with PRINCESS YUE.

PRINCESS YUE
So they don't have palaces in the Southern Tribe?

SOKKA
Are you kidding? I grew up in a block of ice -- it's not exactly a cultural hub.

PRINCESS YUE
(LAUGHING)

She gently touches him on the shoulder. Sokka smiles. Yue sees where her hand is and pulls it away.

PRINCESS YUE (cont'd)
Sokka... this is wrong.

SOKKA
<u>What's</u> wrong? We're taking a walk!

PRINCESS YUE
I'm engaged. It just... feels...

Sokka sees that he's losing her. He acts quickly.

SOKKA
I know what you need -- you need to meet my good friend Appa.

PRINCESS YUE
Who?

EXT. STABLES - MOMENTS LATER

Sokka introduces Yue to APPA as he pats the bison on the nose.

SOKKA
Appa and I go way back, don't we boy?

Appa excitedly jumps on Sokka, pinning him to the ground and licking him intensely.

SOKKA (cont'd)
(STARTLED SCREAM) Easy! Down boy! No, up!

PRINCESS YUE
Looks like you haven't been giving Appa enough attention.

SMASH CUT TO:

28 Sokka and the Princess aboard Appa. 28

PRINCESS YUE (cont'd)
So how does this work?

SOKKA
You hanging on tight?

Yue nods. Sokka smiles knowingly, and his eyes narrow confidently.

SOKKA (cont'd)
(suave)
Yip. Yip.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. WATER TRIBE CITY - CONTINUOUS

Appa LAUNCHES into the atmosphere like a rocket.

PRINCESS YUE
(ultra-excited)
Ohhh myyyyy gooodness!

EXT. SKY - APPA'S BACK - CONTINUOUS

The princess gazes below at the city, enjoying the view.

PRINCESS YUE
Wow! I can’t believe you do this every day.

SOKKA
Yeah, we pretty much live up here.

He slaps Appa’s hide affectionately.

PRINCESS YUE
Is it always this cold in the sky?

Shivering, she huddles close to Sokka. He looks back at her and smiles.

SOKKA
Not when you’re with someone.

He moves closer. Their faces are very close -- she looks up and gazes into his eyes.

PRINCESS YUE
It’s beautiful up here.

SOKKA
(lost in the moment)
Yeah...

For a second we think they might be about to kiss... but once again, they catch themselves and separate.

SOKKA (cont’d)
(AWKWARD EXHALE) Whoo. Yeah... good times, good times...
(suddenly distracted)
Hey, look.

Sokka notices black snow falling from the sky.

PRINCESS YUE
What’s happening?

APPA
(GROWLS)

SOKKA
Oh no.

QUICK CUT TO:

EXT. WATER TRIBE CITY - CONTINUOUS

Denizens of the Water Tribe GASP in awe as black snow begins to fall on their city...

QUICK CUT TO:

EXT. TRAINING FIELD - SIMULTANEOUS

Aang and Momo are catching snowflakes in their mouths, as Katara watches the chaos of the unruly class. Suddenly, Aang and Momo see the black snow. Disgusted, Momo begins to spit the snowflakes from his mouth. Aang looks baffled. Katara, on the other hand, reacts in horror.

QUICK CUT TO:

EXT. CHIEF'S TEMPLE - CONTINUOUS

Master Pakku and the Water Tribe Messenger stand beside a decorative fountain. They watch in awe as the black snow falls and contaminates their fountain.

QUICK CUT TO:

INT. WATER TRIBE ARMORY - SIMULTANEOUS

CHIEF ARNOOK and several soldiers stare out the window watching the black snow fall.

CUT TO:

EXT. WATER TRIBE CITY - SECONDS LATER

Sokka is now down on the ground, holding a handful of the stuff.

SOKKA
Soot.

PRINCESS YUE
What?

SOKKA
I've seen it before... right before my village was attacked. It's soot mixed with snow.

PRINCESS YUE
But why?

SOKKA
(with great dread)
It’s the Fire Nation. They’ve closed in on the North Pole. And from the looks of this stuff, I’d say there’s a lot of them.

EXT. NORTHERN SEA - ADMIRAL ZHAO’S SHIP - THAT MOMENT

ADMIRAL ZHAO stands on the deck with UNCLE IROH.

ADMIRAL ZHAO
This will truly be one for the history books, General Iroh. Just think: centuries from now, people will study the great Admiral Zhao, who destroyed the last of the Water Tribe civilization. You’re lucky you’re here to see it.

Uncle shifts uneasily.

UNCLE
Be careful what you wish for, Admiral. History is not always kind to its subjects.

ADMIRAL ZHAO
I suppose you speak from experience. But rest assured, this will be nothing like your legendary failure at Ba Seng Se.

UNCLE
(pained)
I hope not, for your sake.

Zhao turns his back, ignoring Uncle.

ADMIRAL ZHAO
Tell the captains to prepare for first strike.

Iroh nods and exits below deck.

INT. ADMIRAL ZHAO’S SHIP - CONTINUOUS

Uncle stops and speaks conspiratorially to a masked Fire Nation soldier.

UNCLE
We’ll be landing soon. Do you have a plan?

The soldier lifts the visor of his helmet, revealing that it's actually PRINCE ZUKO in disguise.

ZUKO
I'm working on it, Uncle.

Uncle nods and continues walking.

EXT. CHIEF'S TEMPLE - A LITTLE LATER

A LOUD BELL rings as everyone in town hurries to the chief's temple. Sokka and the Princess are running along with everyone else, but suddenly she stops.

SOKKA
What's wrong? We have to go!

Sokka tries to escort her by the arm. She stops and brushes his hand off of her.

PRINCESS YUE
No, Sokka... wait. I can't see you anymore -- not at all.

SOKKA
(shocked and hurt)
What? We're just friends.

PRINCESS YUE
I wish we could just be friends... but I like you too much, and it's too confusing to be around you. I'm marrying someone else.

She turns away from him.

SOKKA
You don't love him, do you? You don't even seem to like him.

PRINCESS YUE
But I do love my people.

SOKKA
You're not marrying them!

PRINCESS YUE
You don't understand. I have duties to my father, to my tribe. I have to do this. Goodbye.

She runs away from him into the chief's temple. Sokka is left standing there, stunned and heartbroken.

INT. CHIEF'S TEMPLE - MINUTES LATER

Everyone associated with the Northern Water Tribe -- including Aang, Katara, and Sokka -- is gathered inside the temple.

CHIEF ARNOOK
The day we have feared for so long has arrived -- the Fire Nation is on our doorstep.

The citizens MURMUR LOUDLY as they take a beat to digest this. Pan across their expressions as the chief continues.

CHIEF ARNOOK (cont'd)
It is with great sadness I call my my family -- here before me, knowing well that some of these faces are about to vanish from our tribe...

ANGLE ON: Princess Yue. (A little subtle foreshadowing!)

CHIEF ARNOOK (cont'd)
But they will never vanish from our hearts. Now, as we approach the battle for our existence, I call upon the great spirits:

During the speech, we see various warriors, elderly, children, etc. reacting. The chief closes his eyes and raises his arms to invoke the spirits.

CHIEF ARNOOK (cont'd)
Spirit of the ocean, spirit of the moon, be with us!

The chief continues addressing the crowd.

CHIEF ARNOOK (cont'd)
I'm going to need volunteers for a dangerous mission...

Sokka stands up.

SOKKA
Count me in.

Katara and Aang look worried.

KATARA
Sokka...

Several more men stand and volunteer.

CHIEF ARNOOK
Be warned: many of you will not return. Come forward to receive my mark if you accept the task.

Sokka and the rest of the volunteers make their way to the front of the room. As they greet the chief, he marks each of them with warrior paint.

Sokka receives his mark from the chief and starts to exit. But he stops and looks back at the princess, whose gaze is still fixed on him -- her heart obviously heavy with sorrow. Trying to remain stoic, Sokka exits the chamber. As soon as he's gone, a tear streams down her cheek.

EXT. CHIEF'S TEMPLE - MINUTES LATER

Aang stands alone, looking out to sea with a troubled look on his face. Chief Arnook and Katara come up behind him.

CHIEF ARNOOK
The stillness before battle is unbearable. Such a quiet dread.

AANG
I wasn't there when the Fire Nation attacked my people.

A look of determination comes over Aang.

AANG (cont'd)
I'm going to make a difference this time.

EXT. WATER TRIBE CITY - OUTER RING - A LITTLE LATER

Dozens of people, including Sokka and Katara, scramble up ladders to peer over the tops of the walls...

In the distance, just barely visible on the horizon, is a tiny, unrecognizable dot. Nobody makes a sound as the dot gets nearer and nearer, turning into a ship. Aang arrives on Appa at the top of the wall.

Suddenly, a small orange light appears above the ship. It grows larger and larger, until... everyone sees that it's actually a LARGE FIERY PROJECTILE heading right for them at an astounding speed.

CRASH! With a thunderous impact, the FIERY BOULDER SMASHES the Water Tribe seal on the outer ring of the city, scattering debris and people all over the place.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. WATER TRIBE CITY - OUTER RING - CONTINUOUS

Everyone runs for cover as a couple more fireballs impact the outer wall and the surrounding ocean.

Aang recovers from the blast, and he and Appa take off toward the battle.

AANG
Yip, yip!

Sokka picks himself up and tries to find his sister. She grabs his hand and pulls herself out of the debris. They look out over the ocean to where Aang has gone.

EXT. NORTHERN SEA - CONTINUOUS

Aang and Appa speed toward the ship that launched the fiery projectile. He sees about four to six trebuchets on board the ship. Then, SWOOOSH! They fire another large, blazing rock -- Aang deflects it with an Airbending blast as it whizzes by, pushing it off course so it careens harmlessly into the ocean.

APPA
(ENRAGED BELLOW)

AANG
I'll take it from here, boy.

Aang throws open his glider and dives toward the ship. Firebenders punch fire blasts at Aang, who weaves through them with great agility.

EXT. NORTHERN SEA - FIRE NATION SHIP - CONTINUOUS

Aang lands on the deck of the ship and is immediately rushed by the many Fire Nation soldiers on board.

Aang spins around and knocks several men overboard with a gust of wind. Then he looks around at the trebuchets -- they're already being reloaded by a few muscular TREBUCHET OPERATORS. The tar-covered boulders are then ignited by Firebenders. Aang runs for the nearest trebuchet.

The muscular trebuchet guys swing large warhammers at Aang, barely missing him as he weaves through them to get to the trebuchet. Two of them simultaneously throw their hammers at Aang. Aang reacts in a manner reminiscent of Katara's Waterbending move, redirecting and accelerating the hammers at the trebuchet's fulcrum. The impact shatters it and causes the firing mechanism to collapse.

Aang hurries to the next trebuchet on the ship. He quickly tampers with the net of the trebuchet, fastening it to a piece of the floorboards. Aang releases the firing mechanism. The trebuchet fires, ripping out a large chunk of the deck, and whipping its fiery boulder straight through the floor in front of it.

Aang avoids Firebending blasts as he makes his way to the next trebuchet. Aang does a huge wind blast using his staff which causes the trebuchet to begin spinning. The boulder in the net whips around as various troops dive for cover. The netted fireball whips around, skewing to the side and crushing another nearby trebuchet!

He runs toward the last trebuchet but is cut off by the angry crew. He turns to go the other way but is met by a line of Firebenders, who are ready to strike. It looks like Aang has nowhere to go, but... he jumps up into the air and hops up the side of the trebuchet, avoiding the fire blasts and weapons as he goes. Aang makes it to the top of the trebuchet and looks down at the numerous troops surrounding him, then... SMACK! Appa comes tearing into frame, sending several of the men overboard with a mighty HEADBUTT.

AANG
Appa!

The bison shakes off several soldiers, flinging some overboard with his teeth. He stares down another group of crew members, wiping his paw on the deck like a bull about to charge.

A few of the more cowardly soldiers consider their odds, and dive overboard to avoid the impending clash. Aang seizes the opportunity, and does a series of flips and turns as he sends numerous air blasts at the trebuchet. The strikes all land and it seems nothing has happened. He looks at Appa and then looks back at the trebuchet. All the rivets pop out and the trebuchet falls apart and collapses.

Suddenly, the boat JOLTS to a stop. Aang looks overboard to see a Water Tribe vessel has arrived, and Waterbenders are bending giant ice spikes out of the ocean which lift the ship out of the water and maroon it. (This is what happened to the abandoned ship in episode 101.)

AANG (cont'd)
(to Appa, panting)
Thanks for the rescue, buddy.

Aang goes pale. In the distance, a vast navy of Fire Navy ships approaches.

AANG (cont'd)
(deflated)
You've got to be kidding me...

In unison, the ships all launch fireballs.

INT. WATER TRIBE ARMORY - LATER

Chief Arnook addresses his special force of volunteer warriors.

CHIEF ARNOOK
You'll be infiltrating the Fire Nation Navy. That means you'll all need one of these uniforms...

We widen to reveal he has dressed someone in an outmoded Fire Nation uniform.

SOKKA
(LAUGHS)

HAHN
What's your problem?

SOKKA
Fire Navy uniforms don't look like that.

Everyone is astounded by Sokka's apparent hubris.

HAHN
Of course they do. These are real uniforms captured from actual Fire Navy soldiers.

SOKKA
When, like a hundred years ago?

CHIEF ARNOOK
Eighty-five.

SOKKA
The Fire Nation doesn't wear shoulder spikes anymore. The newer uniforms are more streamlined.

HAHN
How do we know we can trust this guy? Such bold talk for a new recruit...

CHIEF ARNOOK
Sokka is from our sister tribe, Hahn. He's a capable warrior, and I value his input.
(back to group)
Now, our first objective is to determine the identity of their commanding officer...

SOKKA
His name is Zhao.

The warriors look at Sokka, impressed.

SOKKA (cont'd)
Middle-aged, big sideburns, bigger temper...

CHIEF ARNOOK
Sokka, I want you to tell everything you know to Hahn -- he's leading this mission.
(turns to Hahn)
Hahn, show Sokka your respect. I expect nothing less from my future son-in-law.

Sokka reacts in disbelief.

SOKKA
Princess Yue's marrying <u>you</u>?

HAHN
Yeah. What of it?

Sokka bites his tongue. We can see his resentment boil.

SOKKA
Nothing. Congratulations.

EXT. NORTHERN WATER TRIBE - OUTER RING - THAT MOMENT

Another large fireball sails over the Water Tribe's walls... And strikes the icy cliffs behind the city.

As another fireball speeds toward the city, Pakku and a few other benders raise a massive wave of water and FREEZE the fireball in midair.

INT. ADMIRAL ZHAO'S SHIP - SUNSET

Zhao stands on the deck, overlooking the battle. Uncle approaches him from behind.

UNCLE
It’s almost twilight, Admiral. As your military consultant, I must advise you to halt your attack.

Admiral Zhao turns to face Uncle, listening.

UNCLE (cont’d)
The Waterbenders draw their power from the Moon, and it is nearly full tonight. You should wait, and resume the attack at daybreak.

An eerie, subtle grin washes over Zhao’s face, flickering in the light of the nearby torches.

ADMIRAL ZHAO
Oh, I am well aware of the Moon problem. And I’m working on a solution.
(ponders for a beat)
But for now, daybreak it is.

Uncle breathes a sigh of relief.

EXT. NORTHERN SEA - FIRE NAVY SQUADRON - SECONDS LATER

The Fire Navy’s trebuchets are eerily quiet now.

EXT. WATER TRIBE CITY - CANALS - CONTINUOUS

The Princess and Katara look out over the city.

PRINCESS YUE
They’ve stopped firing.

Suddenly, Aang comes flying back on Appa. They’re both tired from fighting.

KATARA
Aang!

AANG
(panting)
I can’t do it... I can’t do it...

KATARA
What happened?!

AANG
I must have taken out a dozen Fire Navy ships, but there's just too many of them. I can't fight them all!

Aang is almost sobbing from defeat. Katara and Princess Yue can think of nothing to say.

PRINCESS YUE
But... you have to. You're the Avatar.

AANG
I'm just one kid...

Katara comforts Aang.

EXT. COMMANDER ZHAO'S SHIP - REAR DECK - DUSK

Zuko straps on the last piece of a heavy, white ninja outfit. Uncle seems weighted with concern as he watches his nephew.

UNCLE
You are fishing for an octopus, my nephew. You need a tightly woven net, or he will squeeze through the tiniest hole and escape.

ZUKO
I don't need your wisdom right now, Uncle.

Zuko pulls on a rope, lowering a lifeboat from the side of the warship. Uncle is somewhat awkward, avoiding eye contact as he fumfers.

UNCLE
I'm sorry, I just nag you because... well, ever since I lost my son... (CHOKES UP)

ZUKO
Uncle, you don't have to say it.

Uncle regains composure and looks Zuko in the eye.

UNCLE
I think of you as my own.

ZUKO
("I love you too.")
I know, Uncle.

Uncle nods.

ZUKO (cont'd)
We'll meet again. After I have the Avatar.

He bows stiffly to Iroh, who answers with an emotional bear hug. Zuko awkwardly returns a half-hug. Then, in a flash, Zuko slides down the ropes into the lifeboat. Uncle leans over the railing and calls down to him.

UNCLE
Remember your "breath of fire" -- it could save your life out there.

ZUKO (O.S.)
I will.

With tears welling in his eyes, Uncle Iroh watches his nephew paddle away in the tiny boat.

UNCLE
And put your hood up -- keep your ears warm.

ZUKO
I'll be fine!

INT. WATER TRIBE ARMORY - CONTINUOUS

Sokka is talking to Hahn as they sharpen their weapons.

HAHN
Let me tell you, Sokka. I've courted a lot of girls, but Yue is the finest... and she comes with the most perks.

SOKKA
Perks? What does that mean?

HAHN
I mean -- Yue's nice and everything, but the points I'll gain with the chief aren't bad either.

He is startled to see Sokka's reaction to this.

SOKKA
Princess Yue is wasted on a self-absorbed weasel like you!

HAHN
Whoa, hang on! What do you care?

Sokka turns away and bites his lip. That remark hit home.

HAHN (cont'd)
(condescending)
You're just a simple rube from the Southern Tribe. What would you know of the political complexities of our life? No offense.

Sokka is now steaming from anger. He whirls around and tackles Hahn. The two knock over a couple of weapon racks, calling everyone's attention to the brawl.

SOKKA
You're just a jerk without a soul! No offense!

Sokka struggles with Hahn. Then, they throw a couple of punches at each other before Chief Arnook breaks them apart.

CHIEF ARNOOK
That's enough!

He directs Sokka to the other end of the barracks and turns to Hahn.

CHIEF ARNOOK (cont'd)
Sokka, you're off the mission.

Sokka hangs his head and bitterly watches Hahn enjoy his promotion.

HAHN
Alright, fall in, men! Everybody listen to what I say, and we'll take out this Admiral Cho in no time!

He and his special forces guys begin to exit. Sokka calls after Hahn to correct him.

SOKKA
It's Admiral Zhao!

EXT. NORTHERN SEA - NIGHT

Prince Zuko is now canoeing his way through the icy waters that surround the Water Tribe city.

He sees a guard tower up ahead, and he folds himself down into his canoe, perfectly camouflaging his body with the ice floe as he passes right under the guards' eyes.

EXT. FRONT LOCKING CHAMBER - MINUTES LATER

Zuko floats along the outer wall of the city, searching for a way in. Around the corner, he sees the Water Tribe's front locking chamber, where a Water Tribe vessel is just returning from battle. It coasts into the waterlocking chamber as a giant door shuts behind it. The chamber then begins to fill with water, lifting the vessel to another large door (just like a modern canal).

Zuko looks at his canoe and realizes he'll never get in that way. But then he notices a herd of seals diving into the water. He waits a few seconds, looking intrigued.

ZUKO
Where are they going?

He approaches the ice ledge where he saw the seals -- sure enough, they aren't coming back up. Zuko looks deep into the water, but he can't see any trace of them.

ZUKO (cont'd)
They're coming up for air somewhere.

He breathes deep, sharp breaths, causing slivers of fire to warm his body. Then, with tightly clinched teeth, Zuko dives into the sub-zero water.

EXT. CHIEF'S TEMPLE - BALCONY - THAT MOMENT

Katara, Princess Yue, and Aang gaze at the bright, nearly full moon. Momo's there too.

PRINCESS YUE
The legends say the Moon was the first Waterbender. Our ancestors saw how it pushed and pulled the tides, and learned how to do it themselves.

KATARA
(realizing)
I've always noticed my Waterbending is stronger at night.

PRINCESS YUE
Our strength comes from the spirit of the Moon, our life comes from the spirit of the ocean. They work together to keep balance.

AANG
The spirits -- maybe I can find them and get their help.

PRINCESS YUE
How can you do that?

KATARA
The Avatar is the bridge between our world and the spirit world. Aang can talk to them!

PRINCESS YUE
Maybe they'll give you the wisdom to win this battle.

AANG
Or maybe they'll unleash a crazy-amazing spirit attack on the Fire Nation!
(beat, off their looks)
Or wisdom, that's good too.

KATARA
The only problem is, last time you got to the spirit world by accident. How are you going to get there this time?

Aang shrugs, "I don't know."

PRINCESS YUE
I have an idea. Follow me.

Katara and Aang look at each other, surprised.

EXT. BEHIND CHIEF'S TEMPLE - MINUTES LATER

The princess leads Aang and Katara behind the temple to a secluded cove.

AANG
So, is this the way to the spirit world?

PRINCESS YUE
(LAUGHS) No. You'll have to get there on your own. But I can take you to the most spiritual place in the entire North Pole...

She motions ahead at a waterfall. They walk through it and find behind it the most lush, green, tropical oasis Aang has ever seen. His eyes nearly pop out of his head at the sight of the odd, out of place garden.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. WATER TRIBE OASIS - CONTINUOUS

Aang immediately begins rolling around in the thick grass as Katara and the princess catch up.

AANG
(LAUGHING) I never thought I'd miss grass this much!

Katara begins to shed her heavy coat.

KATARA
It's so warm here! How is that possible?

PRINCESS YUE
It's the center of all spiritual energy in our land.

With folded arms, she glares at Momo, who is trying to catch a swimming koi fish in a nearby fountain. He sees everyone staring and shies away from it.

AANG
You're right, Yue. I can feel... something. It's so... tranquil.

He sits in the lotus position and fixes his gaze on the two swimming koi in the fountain.

INT. UNDERGROUND ICE CAVERN - NIGHT

One by one, a herd of seals begins to emerge from the freezing-cold water. They leap onto the solid ground inside an icy, underground cavern. A beat later, Zuko emerges from the water and heaves himself onto the solid ground.

ZUKO
(CATCHING HIS BREATH)

Zuko slowly gets to his feet, trying hard to keep his metabolism going. Suddenly, he blows himself dry with a violent Firebending move. The nearby seals BARK angrily at their insensitive trespasser.

ZUKO (cont'd)
Be quiet!

Zuko shoves his way through the crowd of seals, who continue BARKING. Zuko examines the corridors of the cave and notices that there are many paths leading in all different directions. He pauses to consider which one to take.

Then he sees the correct path -- a waterfall coming down from directly overhead. He begins scaling the sides of the cave, toward the top of the waterfall.

INT. WATER TRIBE ARMORY - THAT MOMENT

Sokka is sitting in the corner, sharpening his boomerang. Suddenly, Chief Arnook appears.

CHIEF ARNOOK
Is something wrong, Sokka?

SOKKA
(bitter)
Oh no. Hahn’s out there on the top-secret mission while I’m here sharpening my boomerang. Everything’s fine.

CHIEF ARNOOK
Listen to me. I took you off the mission for selfish reasons -- I have a special task in mind for you.

SOKKA
What, you want me to scrub the barracks?

CHIEF ARNOOK
I want you to guard my daughter, Princess Yue.

Sokka stares at the chief for a beat, trying to keep a poker face.

SOKKA
(SWALLOWS NERVOUSLY) Sure... that shouldn’t be too hard.

INT. UNDERGROUND ICE CAVE - LATER

Zuko is fighting the force of the falling water as he attempts to dig his way through the hard, densely packed ice overhead. He pulls away a large chunk of frozen earth, releasing an even bigger torrent of water onto his head.

ZUKO
(AGONIZING GROANS)

The Prince almost loses his grip, but he manages to grab a stalactite and regain his footing. Holding his breath, he reaches up through the waterfall and pulls himself up through the hole he made...

INT. SMALLER UNDERGROUND CAVE - CONTINUOUS

Zuko finds himself swimming through a cave that is almost completely filled with water. He pokes his head above the water and takes another HUGE BREATH before going back under.

He sees a narrow tunnel hidden beneath the water, and swims into it.

INT. NARROW WATER TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

Zuko swims with vigor toward what appears to be the way out. But instead, he hits a solid sheet of ice at the end of the tunnel. Zuko punches the ice, but he can't generate enough force to break it. He can see daylight through the translucent ice barrier. He punches it again, and it still doesn't crack.

Zuko can feel himself running out of air. Zuko uses his hands to melt a small hole in the ice. He kicks the ice as hard as he can. It begins to fracture, and on Zuko's next kick, the wall bursts open. The water level drops instantly and Zuko is ejected into...

EXT. WATER TRIBE CITY - CANALS - CONTINUOUS

ZUKO
(DESPERATE GASPS FOR AIR)

Zuko looks as if maybe he wasn't so sure he was going to make it. He looks up and realizes he is in a canal inside the Water Tribe city. Zuko climbs out of the canal and darts away into the darkness.

EXT. WATER TRIBE OASIS - THAT MOMENT

Aang is now sitting in the lotus position in front of the koi fountain. Katara and Princess Yue whisper to each other, trying not to disturb Aang.

PRINCESS YUE
(whispering)
Why is he sitting like that?

KATARA
(whispering)
He's meditating -- trying to cross over into the spirit world. It takes all his concentration.

PRINCESS YUE
(whispering)
Is there any way we can help?

Suddenly, Aang turns around with eyes wide open.

AANG
How about some quiet? Come on, guys, I can hear every word you're saying.

Katara and the princess smile at each other with their mouths shut tightly. Aang continues his meditation as he watches the koi swim in a circular fashion. The fish -- one black, one white -- begin to look like a spiralling yin-yang. The yin-yang pulsates and even appears to grow larger as the fish swim faster and faster.

186 Suddenly, the princess reacts with surprise as Aang's tattoos 186
begin to glow.

PRINCESS YUE
Is he okay?

KATARA
He's crossing into the spirit world. He'll be fine as long as we don't move his body. That's his way back to the physical world.

PRINCESS YUE
Maybe we should get some help?

KATARA
No. He's my friend. I'm perfectly capable of protecting him.

ZUKO (O.S.)
Well, aren't you a big girl now?

Katara's hairs stand on end when she hears Zuko's voice. She spins around to face him.

KATARA
(horrified)
No...

ZUKO
Yes. Hand him over and I won't have to hurt you.

Zuko steps toward Aang aggressively, but Katara surprises him with an astounding display of Waterbending -- resulting in Zuko landing belly-down on the ground with his face frozen to the ice. He struggles for a second, then frees himself with a big, fiery exhale.

Then, in the light of a nearly full moon, Katara and Zuko square off. Princess Yue runs off, unnoticed.

ZUKO (cont'd)
I see you've learned a new trick. But I didn't come this far to lose to you.

He attempts a couple of flaming roundhouse kicks. Katara quickly blocks them with a couple of ICE BEAMS, which she bends from a nearby canal.

Frustrated, Zuko unleashes a FLURRY of kicks and punches. Katara backs away, repeatedly blocking his blows with her ice blocking technique. After several blocked punches, Zuko realizes he is entirely imprisoned by her ice beams.

ZUKO (cont'd)
(impressed, in spite of himself)
You little peasant...

He SHATTERS the ice beams with a couple of swift kicks.

ZUKO (cont'd)
You've found a master, haven't you?

He charges at her with his fire daggers, slashing through the air with the flaming blades. Katara evades a couple of these, then... she literally bends the ice right out from under Zuko, sending him crashing onto his face again.

As Zuko gets to his feet, he sees the Avatar sitting just a few feet away. Zuko makes a run for him, and actually manages to grab part of Aang's robe, when Katara knocks him to the ground with a powerful water blast. She stands above him in a fighting posture.

Even more enraged, Zuko takes his heaviest swings at Katara yet. With a subtle Tai-Chi flourish, she Waterbends a thick layer of ice around Zuko's face. He stumbles around blindly, trying to remove it.

ZUKO
(MUFFLED SWEARING)

Katara hits him again, this time with an ice javelin. It hits Zuko in the chest and shatters. But the blow tears his clothes and knocks him across the oasis and into a canal. Katara quickly follows through by freezing the canal, holding Zuko in place.

INT. ADMIRAL ZHAO'S SHIP - THAT MOMENT

Zhao is peering out the window of his cabin. The faintest sliver of orange is beginning to appear on the horizon.

ADMIRAL ZHAO
It's daybreak at last. Let's write history.

Uncle nods and signals to the helmsman.

EXT. NORTHERN SEA - CONTINUOUS

Just outside the Water Tribe city, the Fire Navy ships begin to move. Smoke billows from their stacks as they pick up momentum.

EXT. WATER TRIBE CITY -- CONTINUOUS

We see various shots of the Water Tribe warriors getting ready for battle -- putting on war paint, preparing their weapons, etc.

EXT. WATER TRIBE OASIS - CONTINUOUS

Zuko breaks himself free of the frozen canal, but Katara strikes again, this time with a move that produces a powerful WATER CANNON. Zuko flies farther down the canal, his body weary from the ass-kicking.

EXT. WATER TRIBE CITY WALLS - CONTINUOUS

The Fire Navy ships land on the shores of the Water Tribe, in a scene reminiscent of D-day. The onslaught of fire soldiers begins -- men with grappling hooks begin scaling the walls, Firebenders focus their flames on the walls in an attempt to break through, and several more soldiers attempt to breach the front locking chamber.

EXT. WATER TRIBE OASIS - CONTINUOUS

Katara and Zuko pause their fight as they hear the sounds of the battle raging at the city gates. Zuko, who is barely conscious, sees the small crescent of sunlight appearing in the sky. With the sun giving him strength, he gets a second wind, and musters a powerful Firebending blast. Katara tries to throw up an ice shield, but the blast is too powerful. Its force sends her flying backwards into the wall behind her. She falls to the ground, unconscious.

ZUKO
You rise with the moon, I rise with the sun.

EXT. WATER TRIBE CITY WALLS - CONTINUOUS

Waterbenders flock to the tops of the walls to defend their city. In remarkable synchronicity, they bend a wave of water over the wall. The water freezes, bombarding the Fire Nation attackers with large chunks of ice.

But it isn't enough to stop the Fire Soldiers. They find a breach in the outer ring, made a by a previous trebuchet attack. They begin to pour through the hole, as Water Tribe soldiers rush to stop them.

Meanwhile, the Fire Nation has successfully broken through the outer wall. They begin to land their invasion forces.

INT. ADMIRAL ZHAO'S SHIP - CONTINUOUS

Zhao watches the battle through a spyglass.

ZHAO
The Water Tribe can try to resist the inevitable, but their city will fall today.

EXT. WATER TRIBE OASIS - CONTINUOUS

Katara is regaining consciousness. Suddenly, she shoots upright.

KATARA
Aang?!

Katara quickly surveys the city. She sees nothing but Water Tribe citizens running all over the place -- no Zuko, no Aang.

KATARA (cont'd)
Aang!!

Princess Yue arrives with Sokka.

SOKKA
What happened?! Where's Zuko?!

KATARA
(full of guilt)
He took Aang... he took him right out from under me.

SOKKA
Where did they go?!

Katara's face says it all -- Aang could be anywhere.

EXT. NORTHERN TUNDRA - MOMENTS LATER

Zuko is now pulling Aang’s limp body on a sled. As he drags the Avatar away into the bleak, white tundra, we...

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW